# Statement of the Government of the German Democratic Republic on the Proposals of the Soviet Government of January 9th 1958 for Lessening International Tension

The Government of the German Democratic Republic has carefully examined the proposals of the Government of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics of January 9th 1958 on questions concerning the relaxation of international tension.

The Government of the German Democratic Republic is guided in its attitude by the interests of the German people in the maintenance of peace and the peaceful and democratic reunification of Germany, and takes into consideration the existing international situation, particularly the situation in the centre of Europe.

The peace-loving forces of the German people which are in control in the German Democratic Republic have always supported the establishment of a united, peace-loving, democratic German state, which will guarantee peaceful work for its population and never again threaten the security of the European peoples.

Acting on behalf of and supported by foreign imperialist circles, especially the U. S. A., the forces now ruling in West Germany have, out of selfish motives, carried out the partitioning of Germany and converted West Germany into a deployment area for a new war.

In this connection we draw attention to the fact that the Federal Government rejected the proposals put forward by the Soviet Union in March 1952 for the re-establishment of German unity and the conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany, and the proposals made by the Government of the German Democratic Republic in January 1954 for the establishment of an All-German Provisional Government to prepare and conduct all-German, general, free, secret and democratic elections to a National Assembly.

During the West German Federal Parliamentary debate of January 23rd and 24th 1958, former members of the Bonn Government revealed facts which confirmed once again that the Federal Government, under Adenauer's leadership, deliberately worked against any understanding, and sacrificed the opportunities for peaceful and democratic reunification of Germany in favour of rearmament and West German integration into an aggressive military pact system.

The situation and experiences of the recent past show that, owing to the attitude of the western powers, the preconditions for a simultaneous and comprehensive solution of all unsettled international questions do not at present exist.

The Government of the German Democratic Republic therefore supports the efforts of the Soviet Government to banish the immediate danger to peace by a step-by-step settlement of the most urgent issues, thus bringing about a gradual improvement in the international atmosphere which will then make it possible to settle other international problems. This would also create better conditions for the establishment of a united, peace-loving, democratic German state.

For these reasons the Government of the German Democratic Republic fully approves of the proposal of the Soviet Government to hold a top level conference of leading statesmen, in which the heads of governments should participate, within the next two or three months, in order to reach agreement

upon effective first steps to abolish the danger of atomic war and to consolidate peace.

For years the Government and the people of the German Democratic Republic have made every possible effort to prevent the development of a new centre of war preparations in Germany and to make an effective contribution to relaxation of international tension.

As early as 1951 the Government of the German Democratic Republic submitted to the Government of the German Federal Republic a proposal to negotiate on the strength, arming and stationing of the police forces in both parts of Germany. Since then the Government and the People's Chamber of the German Democratic Republic have taken many serious steps to abolish, by way of agreement between both German states, the dangers arising for the German people and for the peace of Europe through the revival of militarism in West Germany.

The following proposals were made:

in September 1954, that the West German Federal Parliament agree on joint measures against rearmament and enter into mutual obligations not to join any military pact;

in January 1956, that both German states support a European Collective Security Treaty and reduction of foreign troops in Germany;

in May 1956, to agree to limit the strength of the armed forces of both sides, not to introduce conscription, and to prohibit the stationing of atomic weapons on the territory of either German state;

in June 1956, the Government of the German Democratic Republic decided to reduce the strength of the National People's Army of the German Democratic Republic by 30,000 men.

The fact that the German Democratic Republic, contrary to West Germany, has renounced the introduction of conscription underlines her sincere desire to contribute effectively to a relaxation of tension.

In contrast to these sincere efforts for mutual understanding and peace, the Government of the Federal Republic pursues a "policy of strength" and re-establishment of German militarism. It has introduced conscription again, formed a new Wehrmacht headed by Hitler's former generals, and integrated the Federal Republic into the aggressive North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. Today the main danger lies in the fact that the Adenauer government, pleading alleged NATO obligations, is already integrating West Germany fully into the NATO atomic arms race; providing the West German army with atomic weapons; setting up rocket ranges and stock-piling further atomic weapons in addition to those American atomic weapons already stationed there. That is, it is preparing for an atomic war.

There is no doubt that the equipment of the Federal Republic with atomic arms makes the solution of the German question impossible. A Federal Army thus equipped will not only considerably aggravate the situation in Germany, but will also multiply the dangers to peace and security throughout Europe.

To place atomic weapons in the hands of German imperialists and Hitlerite generals, who have been guilty of the most atrocious crimes, is equivalent to gambling with the fate of Germany and peace. History shows that the German imperialists are willing to plunge into any adventure as soon as they feel strong enough to take the risk. Armed with atomic weapons they will be even more encouraged in their aggressive plans. Even a minor local border incident provoked by aggressive forces in the Federal Republic might plunge Germany and all of Europe into a frightful atomic war.

For these reasons the Government of the German Democratic Republic deems it especially urgent for both German states to refrain from any atomic arming and to prevent the stationing of atomic weapons in Germany, so as to ban the danger of atomic warfare in the centre of Europe. It therefore welcomes the proposal of the Soviet Union to discuss at a summit conference the establishment of an atom-free zone in Europe.

On July 27th 1957 the Government of the German Democratic Republic proposed that both German states "agree to prohibit the stationing and manufacturing of atom bombs and atomic weapons on German territory, and to prohibit propaganda in favour of atomic war."

On December 11th 1957 Prime Minister Otto Grotewohl submitted another proposal not to include Germany in atomic rearmament. According to this proposal the two German states should agree:

"1. Not to permit third powers to station or stockpile atomic bombs or rockets on the territory of either German state.

2. Not to produce atomic bombs or rockets themselves and not to buy or obtain them in any other way from other states.

3. Not to equip their armed forces with atomic weapons or rockets of whatever origin.

4. In negotiations between the Federal Republic and the occupation powers to achieve the withdrawal of weapons of mass destruction already stationed in West Germany."

The German Democratic Republic urged agreed control to ensure that such a limited disarmament agreement be observed.

Thanks to the readiness of the Polish People's Republic and the Czechoslovak Republic to enter into a similar obligation if atomic weapons are excluded from the territory of the two German states, the proposals of the Government of the German Democratic Republic to the Federal Government have met with a response far beyond the borders of Germany.

The plan for an atom-free zone submitted by M. Rapacki, Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs, to the United Nations General Assembly, and the readiness of the Soviet Government to enter into obligations in connection with the establishment of an atom-free zone together with the Governments

of the U.S.A., Great Britain and France open up prospects for the German people and for the whole of Europe of a decisive turn to a policy of lessening tension and encourage peaceful co-existence.

For the German people this would imply an effective guarantee that their country would not become a theatre of atomic war.

Three of the four states directly concerned — the German Democratic Republic, the Polish People's Republic and the Czechoslovak Republic — have already pledged their readiness to fulfil the obligations arising for them from the plan for an atom-free zone. It is now up to the Federal Government to consent to this peace plan. The Government of the German Federal Republic now bears the sole responsibility for the success or failure of this step towards relaxation of tension in Europe.

The peoples of Europe prefer to take the road to an atom-free zone rather than that leading to atomic war. This is clear from the great response which all European peoples have accorded the proposal for an atom-free zone. The people of both German states would give their unequivocal consent to an atom-free zone if it were put to them in a plebiscite.

If the population of the German Federal Republic had the chance to decide freely whether the German Federal Republic should become a part of an atom-free zone, it would be clearly revealed that the Federal Government is isolated from the people. The fact that the governments of other European states are considering the inclusion of their countries in such a zone, and the positive attitude of many European statesmen and politicians who urge the discussion of this plan indicates, that it is both necessary and possible to put an end to atomic armament.

In its efforts to prevent the establishment of an atom-free zone the West German Federal Government claims — contrary to facts and to international law — the exclusive right to represent Germany, and declares that the Federal Republic cannot negotiate with the German Democratic Republic. These excuses are intended to mask the determination of the ruling circles in the Federal Republic to prevent any measures whatever for relaxing tension.

The Federal Government's claim that the stationing of American atomic weapons in West Germany does not fall within its competence and is subject to decision by NATO is another attempt to distort the truth and to divert attention from the Federal Government's responsibility. On May 1st 1957 the then Secretary-General of NATO, Lord Ismay, declared at a press conference in Bonn that the government of each NATO member state can decide for itself whether it agrees to the stationing of atomic weapons on its territory or not. The Federal Government therefore consented of its own free will and against the will of the German people to the American military demand to station atomic weapons in the Federal Republic. There is no room for doubt that it is also in favour of the establishment of rocket bases as demanded by NATO.

The Government of the German Democratic Republic is fully convinced that an agreement on an atom-free zone would be an important step towards a comprehensive agreement on the reduction of both nuclear and conventional weapons.

As the western powers are at present not prepared to agree to the prohibition of all nuclear weapons, the proposal of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics to stop at least nuclear tests immediately for two or three years offers a real possibility of taking a first step in this direction. The proposed ban on nuclear weapons could considerably lessen the danger of atomic war.

The Government of the German Democratic Republic fully supports the proposal of the Soviet Government to conclude some form of non-aggression pact between the member states of the North Atlantic Bloc and the member states of the Warsaw Treaty. Such a pact would be of special importance for the German people.

In January 1956 the Government of the German Democratic Republic submitted the proposal that both German states should solemnly pledge themselves to renounce the use of force against each other. Since both states belong to opposing power groups a non-aggression pact between the NATO and the Warsaw treaty states would be of great importance in countering the danger of a bloody civil war of Germans against Germans. Such a non-aggression pact would be sincerely welcomed by all peaceloving Germans.

The same holds good for the renewed proposal of the Soviet Government to come to an understanding about the reduction and withdrawal of foreign troops from the territories of the NATO states and the Warsaw Treaty countries, but especially from German territory. The Government of the German Democratic Republic has repeatedly submitted its own proposals in this sense; these were, however, disregarded by the Government of the Federal Republic, obviously because it is not willing to renounce the presence of foreign troops.

In the recent decision of the Soviet Government to reduce its armed forces by a further 300,000 men — amongst these 41,000 of the Soviet troops stationed in the German Democratic Republic — the German people see further evidence of the consistent efforts of the Soviet Government to relax tension in Germany and in Europe. The people of the two German states expect the western powers to follow these repeated Soviet actions and to reduce their armed forces in the Federal Republic and West Berlin also.

The Government of the German Democratic Republic is in full agreement with the Soviet readiness to conclude control measures for the observation of agreements already concluded. In this connection it recalls that it has explicitly expressed its agreement to appropriate control measures to implement an agreement on an atom-free zone.

The Government of the German Democratic Republic also supports the proposal of the Soviet Government to come to an agreement on the cessation of war propaganda as carried out by some western countries. Attention should be drawn here to the dangerous activities of the intelligence and espionage agencies, the slanderous broadcasts from radio stations in West Germany and West Berlin, and to the propaganda organised and encouraged by monopolist and militarist circles in the German Federal Republic against the German Democratic Republic. This activity calls for aggression against the German Democratic Republic, preaches a policy of revenge — especially against the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, the Polish People's Republic and the Czechoslovak Republic — and demands a general military crusade against the Socialist camp.

Proposals of the Government of the German Democratic Republic to cease war propaganda in West Germany have so far been ignored by the Federal Republic. Every kind of war propaganda is prohibited within the territory of the German Democratic Republic and is punishable in accordance with the Law for the Protection of Peace which was passed on December 15th 1950.

The Government of the German Democratic Republic welcomes the proposal of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics to discuss measures to extend international trade relations. It is of the opinion that discriminating trade practices by the imperialist states must be brought to an end so as to ensure normal economic relations between all states on a basis of mutual advantage.

The Government of the German Democratic Republic supports the initiative of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics to enter into an obligation together with the western great powers to do nothing to violate the independence of the Near and Middle Eastern countries and to renounce categorically the application of force in resolving the problems of this area. In this connection it calls attention to its repeated statements condemning imperialist intrigues and assuring the peoples of these countries of the full sympathy of the government and people of the German Democratic Republic in their struggles for national independence and self-determination. The German Democratic Republic condemns the attitude of the Government of the German Federal Republic in directly or indirectly supporting the forces of unrest in the Near and Middle East which are striving to prevent a lasting peace.

The cessation of the cold war and the establishment of an atmosphere of trust as a result of a summit conference as proposed by the Soviet Government would without doubt also facilitate the peaceful and democratic reunification of Germany. In view of the existence of two German states, peaceful reunification of Germany is not possible except through an understanding between these two states. The Government of the German Democratic Republic explained in detail in its document of July 27th 1957 — "The German Nation's Road to Peace and Reunification" — that at present a confederation is the only practical way of achieving a united, peaceful and democratic Germany. It is an indisputable fact that the settlement of German problems is first and foremost the business of the German people themselves.

For the reasons stated above, and as already stated at previous deliberations between the two governments, the Government of the German Democratic Republic supports the new peace initiative of the Soviet Union and notes with special satisfaction that there has again been full conformity in the views of both states on the present international situation and the measures to be taken.

The Government of the German Democratic Republic is ready to take all possible measures and to play its full part in carrying out the proposals submitted on January 9th 1958 by the Government of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics. It is determined to continue to do everything in its power to maintain peace, to further understanding between the peoples and to achieve peaceful coexistence.

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